

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Highland Print Studio	
Application Reference number:	G201001091	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£68,426	£69,703

Officer's recommendation

Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks

Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words

Comments:

The applicant is Highland Print Studio (HPS). Based in Inverness, HPS provide open access facilities for printmaking and digital media as well as activities throughout the Highlands and cater for a wide range of groups including professional artists, schools, community groups and creative industries. HPS is building a good relationship with the local authority and work closely with a number of organisations and groups across the Highlands (letters of support have been provided). They are also one of the few providers of visual arts activities in the Highlands and claim that they are the *only organisation in the Highlands providing any kind of visual arts activity by professional artists, for disabled people.*

HPS are planning to increase staffing resources to allow them to further develop their programme particularly elements relating to professional support and education and outreach. The proposed staffing additions have a solid rationale and the addition of 1.5 FTE posts should bring substantial developments to the organisation and the visual arts sector in the Highlands.

The portfolio of evidence has a strong artistic vision running through it and the business plan is regarded as coherent and pragmatic. HPS have successfully managed to eliminate the debt from art.tn which evidences their solid business approach. Education and outreach are fully integrated into their business plans and they are clear in their ambition of working with hard to reach groups throughout the Highlands.

AC, Head of Visual Arts is supportive of the application and acknowledges that ambitions of the organisation have been limited by the lack of staffing resource available.

The application meets the stated criteria for Flexible funding as well as meeting the Visual Arts priority of supporting artists' development.

The budget needs further interrogation and HPS will need to clarify their expectations in terms of when flexible funding will be available.

Strengths

- Good record of successful management
- clear artistic vision
- solid approach to education and outreach
- integrated approach to public engagement

Weaknesses

- the success of the business plan relies to an extent on the relocation to Bank Street which is subject to successful fundraising
- there is an ambiguity over budget year dates and expected commencement of flexible funding

Officer's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Lead Officer signature:

Print name:

Anne Petrie

Date: 24 Jan 08
Revised: 20/3/08

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

Comments:

The Specialist Advisors panel that considered this application included Alastair Snow, Helen Monaghan, Stephen Beddoe, Kirstie Skinner and Maureen Finn.

Artistic vision and leadership – Medium; Advisors welcomed the clarity of vision in the plan but noted that the organisation has not had the capacity to deliver on this vision in full to date. The case had been made through the plan that future funding would help to enable the vision to be achieved.

Public engagement – Medium; Advisors recognised the commitment to this area and the work achieved to date. Again, noted that a strong case had been made within the plan that activity has been limited due to the capacity of the staff team and the nature of the existing premises.

Overall rating – Medium; Advisors believed the plan offered a clear vision for the future that addressed the criteria for flexible funding. The Advisors suggest a Medium rating in light of the development areas identified below:

In agreeing a medium rating the Advisors identified the following development areas: to retain the organisation's focus on the development of a strong creative programme; to continue to plan incremental growth to avoid over stretching the core capacity of the organisation.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

Fit with FXO criteria

Vision and leadership/role within sector/support to artists

Highland Print studio provides artists with access to specialist equipment and technical expertise. It is the only facility of its kind in the Highland area and is a strategic resource in supporting the creative and professional development of artists working in Inverness and the Highland area. The organisation has a clear and focussed plan that would enable realistic growth. With a guarantee of 2 year funding Highland Print studio could be more confident in its programming activity and support more ambitious projects. The planned move to Bank Street is likely to attract a wider range of people (artists and non artists) to the studio and offers significant potential.

Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning

Highland Print studio has a clear and evidenced commitment to working with the widest range of people and has established projects with disability groups, care homes for the elderly, primary schools pupils, etc. The Studio sees this work as an integral aspect of its creative programme. There is a strong and growing demand for projects in partnership with Highland Print studio and flexible funding would enable the organisation to plan more effectively so that work can be

meaningfully sustained over time.

Good practice in governance and management

The Board has demonstrated effective governance and the small staff team has consistently achieved agreed targets and outcomes.

Equal Opportunities/widening access

Highland Print Studio has a strong and evidence commitment to inclusive practice and the planned relocation will enable studio facilities to be accessed by all.

Other income of at least 25%

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

Fit with Departmental priorities

Highland Print studio offers important support to a range of artists across the Highland area and through its plan has presented a strong artistic vision. It therefore meets the Department's aim of developing opportunities that support artists.

Given limited resources the programme has been focussed on production and participation at local / regional level. It is therefore not currently meeting the other Departmental aim of promoting nationally and internationally significant work.

Fit with Scottish Arts Council's Aims

As described above the organisation meets the aims of SAC in supporting artists, increasing participation and furthering opportunities in the arts through education.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments

Application Rating: Medium, this application meets the FXO criteria and one of the Departmental aims. There are development areas identified.

Strengths of application: clear plan; good support for artists; evident commitment to increasing public participation; effective governance and management.

Weaknesses of application: the creative vision of the organisation has been limited due to lack of staff time.

Potential risks and suggested development areas: plan is reliant on relocation to original premises which is dependent on Lottery funding. If successful in this application the organisation has to demonstrate its ability to pursue an ambitious creative programme that promotes work of national and international significance.

***Recommended level of support:* £70,000**

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme		
<p>Comments: Highland Print Studio is based in Inverness.</p> <p>As the only facility of its kind in the Highland area the organisation attracts artists and participants from outside City and develops projects with groups across the region.</p>		
Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 15/2/08 Revised: 26/3/08
Print name:	Amanda Catto	

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Support of £65,000 annually is proposed.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Strong Medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £65,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Strong Medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date: 10 April 2008

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£65,000

End of Assessment